

Where's the CHILI?

A twenty-minute drive turned into 4 hours of waiting in traffic that stretched out for miles.

Chilifest is an annual event in Snook, Texas, combining live music, chili cook-offs, and a festive atmosphere. Chilifest is a two-day music festival and features performances from some of the biggest names in country music and rock. Fraternities from Texas A&M and men's organizations construct elaborate builds, transforming the festival grounds into mini-cities.

Chilifest started as a chili fundraiser in a Walmart parking lot hosted by the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. Currently, it has become a sponsored music festival that attracts over 35,000 people, according to the Fifty Grande. It has transcended its modest and small beginnings to become a canvas on which the vibrant strokes of country music, lively fraternities, and copious amounts of alcohol converge.

The festival, once a modest affair, has now become a cultural cornerstone, attracting not only enthusiasts of country music but also those seeking a sensory feast of diverse genres. With every passing edition, the festival has solidified its reputation as a magnet for some of the biggest names in the industry, such as Willie Nelson, Whiskey Myers, and Jamey Johnson.

"Music is important to attract people to come to the event," psychology senior Allison Yates said

"Most people go to drink, but if they advertised it as a drinking festival, they would not be able to sell tickets as easily. Since it's a music festival, it allows people to have a good time but also get to listen to good country music."

Beyond the entertainment and party atmosphere, Chilifest is also recognized for its philanthropic efforts. With a 30-year history of charitable donations, the festival has contributed over \$4,000,000 to local charities in the Brazos Valley, making it not just a celebration but also a significant force for good in the community, according to KBTX News.

Albeit the air at the festival resonates with beer and chili, the one thing that many festivalgoers mentioned was never actually seeing any chili. It's an ongoing joke that there is no chili, according to communication sophomore Ryen Sanchez, and DeVries mentioned that he has never found chili either.

The camaraderie born from shared jokes about the mysterious chili, the rhythm of diverse music, and the endurance of the festival's unique challenges intertwine to form the fabric of an unforgettable experience.

Story by Shalina Sabih



HATS OFF AGS

Festivalgoers raise their cowboy hats to the performer during the second day of Chilifest.

Photo by Adriano Espinosa

YOUNG LOVE

Chris Young walks onstage on Saturday, April 6, 2024, at Chilifest. *Photo by Adriano Espinosa*



SHOULDER TO SING FROM

Two Chilifest attendees sit atop shoulders while they sing along at day two of the music festival. *Photo by Adriano Espinosa*